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NARRATOR Harry Smith

INTERVIEWER Phyllis Lotz

PLACE Grand Ave, Los Olivos

DATE July 29, 1981

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Interview with Harry Smith
Interviewer: Phyllis Lotz
Transcriber: Phyllis Lotz
Date of Interview: 29 July 1981, Los Olivos, CA.

PL: Introduction. Mr. Smith of Buellton, Ca. was originally from Los Olivos where his parents settled. I drove Mr. Smith to Los Olivos and we sat in the car on the main street, Grand Ave. and talked about his childhood and remembrances of Los Olivos and his family.

Mr. Smith, thank you for this interview, and to begin, may I ask if you remember your grandparents?

Smith: I remember my Dad's mother, and also remember Mother's Dad and mother. Mother's parents were Amanda Hartley and Lewis Hartley, and Dad's mother was a Smith. Dad came here in 1890. My mother came here from Kansas when she was seven years old. Dad was born in Mendocino County, CA., so he was a Native Californian. All six of us Smith children were born in Los Olivos.

PL: Is the home where you lived still standing?

Smith: Yes, its the one we came by down the grade on Hwy. 154, above Mattei's Tavern.

PL: How did the Smiths decided to come to the Santa Ynez Valley?

They first went to Washing State and then to Arizona by horse and wagon, they were not there very long and got this far on their way back north. They did

not come in on the railroad. When they arrived here they bought 100 acres of land for 25 dollars an acre, and then an adjoining 100 acres to the north and west of town. They did farming and has some pasture. This second 100 acres was part of the old Buell ranch. The San Carlos de Jonata ran right through Solvang, to the Mission lands and right down the top of the hills that divided our two parcels of land. That second section that was bought cost 35 dollars an acre. We farmed half and the rest was for a dairy of 35 cows and we raised hay for them. We never had a tractor, only horses. And that kept us going.

PL: Did you provide milk for others?

Smith: At one time there was a dairy on the Mattei place and they put up a small building on top of the hill as a cheese factory. That building is still standing. That land is where the George Chamberlain place is now. We would take our milk over there and they made cheese and then we got the whey back to feed to our calves and pigs. We did ship the cream to San Luis Obispo by train, there to be made into butter.

PL: Did you father build your home?

Smith: He had it built.

PL: What are the names of your brothers and sisters?

Smith: Alby, born in 1904, George, who we all called Bea,

born in 1907, me, Harry, born in 1909, Eunice, born in 1912, Ronald, born in 1915, and Edna, born in 1919. Alby died in 19 , Bea went fishing off Gaviota and never returned, we don't know to this day what happened. The five of us stayed here in the valley, my brother Ronald lives here in Los Olivos.

PL: You went to Los Olivos School?

Smith: Yes, and we walked to school, took our lunch all through 8th grade and then I went to high school for two years, to the school building on the hill and the end of Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez. At that time the total enrollment was 54. I did not get into sports as Jim Anderson did. Basketball was the only sport to compete in as the school has such a small enrollment.

PL: After leaving school what did you do?

Smith: I started to work for the state, odd jobs, and on ranches too. Then I got into the gasoline business as a distributor for Texaco, and spend 13 years at that. We used to haul from Santa Maria into here. Then they put a distributor into Lompoc so we moved there, for 12 years. Then I go a chance to take over General Petroleum, which became Mobile, and for both of those I worked 33 years. Mobile pulled out and an independent, Exxon came in, and I would go to work when I wanted to.

PL: Tell me about your wife, Alice?

Smith: She came from North Dakota in 1924, the Fredricksen Family. There were 8 in the family, 4 boys, and 4 girls. Alice did not get much school either. The children were Lester, Harry, Stanley, Milton, Elna, Alice, Hazel, Florence.

PL: Do you have children of your own?

Smith: Yes, a boy, Eugene and a girl, Caroline. Eugene has three boys, and our daughter has a boy and a girl. Gene and Carline went to 8th grade in Lompoc and then to Santa Ynez Highschool here. And then both went on to college at San Jose State. Caroline became a teacher and Gene got his masters in Geology. He is now working for the government in Australia. He wrote his thesis on the copper mining on Figueroa Mountain. He was always interested in rocks, and spend a lot of time up in the mountains of Santa Barbara County.

PL: What can you tell me about mines here in the Santa Ynez Valley?

Smith: There was quick silver mines on Figueroa, and copper. Gene had quite a time on Figueroa because they told him there was 32% copper up there and he had to dispute that as much less. He got about 3 % from his findings and they weren't happy with him over that but these mine owners sent a specimen to Arizona and it came back 3% The man who owned

the mine here was Frazer. Davis from Santa Barbara put up the money to get the mine going and they kept saying there was a good bit of copper there. Caroline has been over seas a lot too, with her husband with Bechtel Co. Right now they are in Switzerland. Our grandson wants to be a doctor and is now working in a hospital in Washington State.

PL: How long have you lived in your present home on Central Ave., Buellton?

Smith: We moved there in 1948. Buellton has put in many new homes. They built Thumbelina, then Buellton Village and they are still building. Thumbelina was once farming land and belonged to Mr. Evert. Solvang has run out of space so housing was started here because of Camp Cook and the war.

PL: Who were some of your neighbors on Central Ave?

Smith: The Laurtizens owned the property at first, they had the house built, then Charles Lewis bought it from them and he was an old timer. We bought from Lewis. Our Mobil plant was adjoining Mr. Batty's property on Ave. of Flags. He was a lawyer and a very sharp man. I believe my Dad worked for the Buells when he first came here. Mother and Dad were married in 1904. I knew Linus Buell. He was a big man something like Odin Buell. Eddie Buell was a son of Linus buell.

PL: You have seen this valley and town change a lot,

haven't you?

Smith: Right across here was where Dallas Davis lived, his store was nearer to Alamo Pintado Street. Mae Brown's house was just across here, then the D.D. Davis store, the metal building, then the building of the movie house as it was attached to his store. On the east side of Grand Ave. above Alamo Pintado St. was Harvey Stonebarger's blacksmith shop, then Campbell's pool hall, and then the stage business. Across Alamo Pintado St. going south on Grand was Bill Downs store, he was a barber too, then another blacksmith shop, then Campbell's barn where he kept his horses.

PL: Los Olivos has not changed much then?

Smith: Not really, not until they started putting in new buildings. Mr. Sides sold hardware, and the merchants did not compete too much, I think they made a reasonable living. I used to go to the movies, the first one to come right after the war (W.W.I.) was Lilac Time or something like that. Many times the film would break and we had to wait for it to be repaired. I can't remember the price of the movie, but we used to get a hair cut for 25 cents.

PL: Did you have any special friends?

Smith: We knew everyone. At that time we had picnics so it was just everyone. May Day, 4th of July.

Remember we stayed very busy, milking cows at six a.m. Each of us had 10 cows to milk. We had to get up at 4, and go after them. I thought everyone got up at 4 a.m.

End of Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1

One of us went after the cows while the others had breakfast and then we managed to get to school by 8 o'clock. School was out by 3 p.m. and we went home to do chores.

PL: Can you tell me anything about the Fleenor Hotel?

Smith: It was a building in a U shape, the part you see from the street now was the dining room and living quarters across the back. I don't remember another hotel in town, beside the Matteis.

PL: Do you remember seeing old Gus Berg?

Smith: Yes, but the Mattei boys were older than I. Bert was in petroleum, Fred took over the tavern after his father, Frank stayed around and did all ranch work, Charles moved to Santa Barbara and had a cutlery shop on State St. Mr. Mattei was a nice old fellow and a real good neighbor. I remember one time my Dad's brother became ill and Dad was going to the bank to borrow money for a trip to see

his brother, but Mr. Mattei said he did not need to do that, that he would help out. Dad got there in time to talk with his brother but he died shortly after. Mrs. Mattei was formable, we saw Mr. more. They always had a Chinese cook. The cook would see us coming home from school and would be out to give us an orange or banana, so we knew him real well. I worked for the Matteis when I was 21, I did everything, washed dishes, cleaned chickens, and Gin was the cook. Mrs. Mattei did not approve of liquor.

PL: How long have you and Mrs. Smith been married?

Smith: When we were first married I was driving a tractor for 20 cents an hour, and this was plowing at night. Ken Fraters was the man I worked for and he worked the Mattei land, raised sugar beets on that place across from our home ranch, across the railroad tracks. That land was leased out to dairies, I don't know if they farmed or not, mostly leased out. There were walnut orchards there because I did work for Frank Mattei doing farming. Those cottages were there as long as I can remember. In fact where the church is now was garages for the visitors cars. I was here at the raising of the flag pole in 1918, in the middle of the street. Picnics were at the Somes place, they had quite a place here. And we had picnics across

the river on what is now the Mitachell Ranch. We didn't have electricity or a telephone, we pumped water from a gas engine and windmill. My Dad was a horse man, in fact he knew a fellow named Charlie Short who had race horses and Dad rode some of these race horses, he weighed 128 pounds as I remember because when we baled hay he would adjust the scales to 128 and that was the way we baled hay. If we went on a picnic there was a usual race, straight distance racing. My Dad was one that felt no matter how much the horse bucked you stayed on him. I remember I was coming home from school, right down in front of Tom Davis store and I had my lunch pail, when Dad came riding in on a colt, and he said there was no use of me walking so I rode home with him, and we had quite a ride. My mother was always there at home. When my Dad said something we listened, but Mother usually gave the spankings. My first grade teacher was George Chester, he had a son, named Tom, and we started school together. Jeannette Lyons was my third grade teacher. She told us good stories. I did pretty good in school. Miss Lyons would tell us Uncle Henry Stories that went on and on from day to day, we loved it. My 8th grade teacher was Henry Wade and he was strict, I remember he kept us after school, all the boys were involved. We had quite a

band, I played trumpet and we played for dances in Los Alamos, with piano, drums. A woman we knew played piano and she would take us around to play. I got a cut on my lip and had to stop playing trumpet. I learned to play from Mr. Wade. And then we had a valley band, Dallas Davis played tuba, Mame Dallas played E Flat alto. We had a good band, and George Campbell played Trombone. During that time we had a dance band, Luie Fox played fiddle and my mother corded on the piano. My Dad lived to dance and ride horses. We had dances at Sides Hall and at the First Christian Church, but we had our chores to do first.

PL: Thank you for this interview